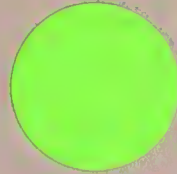


The Art of Public Speaking



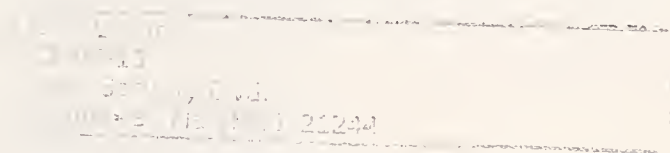
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The Medicaid/Medicare Management Institute, within the Health Care Financing Administration, works to improve Medicaid and Medicare program management. Through problem analysis, training programs, technical assistance, and dissemination of written information, the Institute encourages positive change in partnership with States and Medicare contractors. Using technical experts from States and contractors as faculty, the Institute provides new information and insights through conferences, workshops, and seminars.

This pamphlet is designed for Institute faculty to help them become comfortable, successful public speakers. Topics include: overcoming stage fright; the preparation and presentation of a speech; and the roles of a speaker.



As a Speaker

Your challenge is to make the audience enjoy listening to you so they will benefit from your message. How successful you are depends on how clearly you present your information—so everyone in the audience understands what you are saying.

Facing the Audience? Take heart.

Facing an audience means standing out in the crowd—holding center stage. “Stage fright” associated with public speaking is a feeling common to most of us.

but remember three things:

1. Nervous? You’re normal! In fact, a certain amount of nervousness makes your system really percolate!
2. Your anxiety is caused by self-consciousness. You can eliminate it. Shift your focus to the task and the audience.
3. You were asked to speak because you have something to say that’s worth listening to. **THE AUDIENCE WANTS YOU TO SUCCEED!**

Preparing your speech

Know your audience **BEFORE** you prepare your speech.

Ask Institute staff to brief you on the intended audience, tone, and theme of the meeting. Consider audience characteristics—backgrounds and affiliations, needs and interests, knowledge and opinions.

Research your topic thoroughly. Make sure you are current on the state-of-the-art. Anticipate questions and challenges.



Writing your speech

The **INTRODUCTION** is the most crucial part of a speech. A good introduction should:

- Capture attention
- Establish rapport
- Promote listener identification with the subject
- Indicate the major thrust of your speech

Some ideas for an effective introduction

- A provocative question or statement
- An anecdote, illustration, or quotation
- A visual aid
- A generalization about human behavior
- A reference to the preceding speech, or moderator, or general circumstances under which you speak

The **BODY** of your speech will be either **PERSUASIVE** or **INSTRUCTIONAL**. A **PERSUASIVE** speech begins with a formal statement or proposal; then you prove you're right with documented supporting material. The **INSTRUCTIONAL** speech begins with a statement of a basic idea. Clarify the basic idea, first, and gradually develop subordinate ideas of technical information in detail.

In either type of speech, make sure that you:

- Define technical or confusing terms.
- Avoid sweeping statements. Be careful not to suggest unintended connotations.
- Use connecting phrases to maintain a coherent train of thought and to assure your speech flows.

The CONCLUSION might be all your audience remembers of your entire speech. Summarize your subject through repetition and reinforcement. Clarify the main topics with an anecdote, quote, or example. Challenge your listeners to act, using the information you have just given. Leave your listeners in a good frame of mind, and they won't forget you or your message.

Giving your speech

Only the beginning and closing of your speech may be written out, or recited from memory. Don't read or memorize the body of your speech. This bores you *and* your listeners.

Instead, use a key-word outline of your main points as a prompting tool. By taking a significant word from each important paragraph of your speech, and putting them in outline form on index cards, you have a key-word outline to jog your memory. This is a handy, condensed version of your speech, and allows flexibility and spontaneity of delivery.

Rehearsing your speech ahead of time builds confidence and perfects speaking skills. Pace your presentation by planning where you will *not* speak. A pause adds emphasis to a word or phrase.

Stimulate your listeners with data, projections, analogies, illustrations, or stories of your own experiences. Used properly and in context, humor can be useful in lightly illustrating a point, providing comic relief. CAUTION: Always keep your jokes short, clean, and inoffensive to your audience. And remember, everyone can't be a Bob Hope!

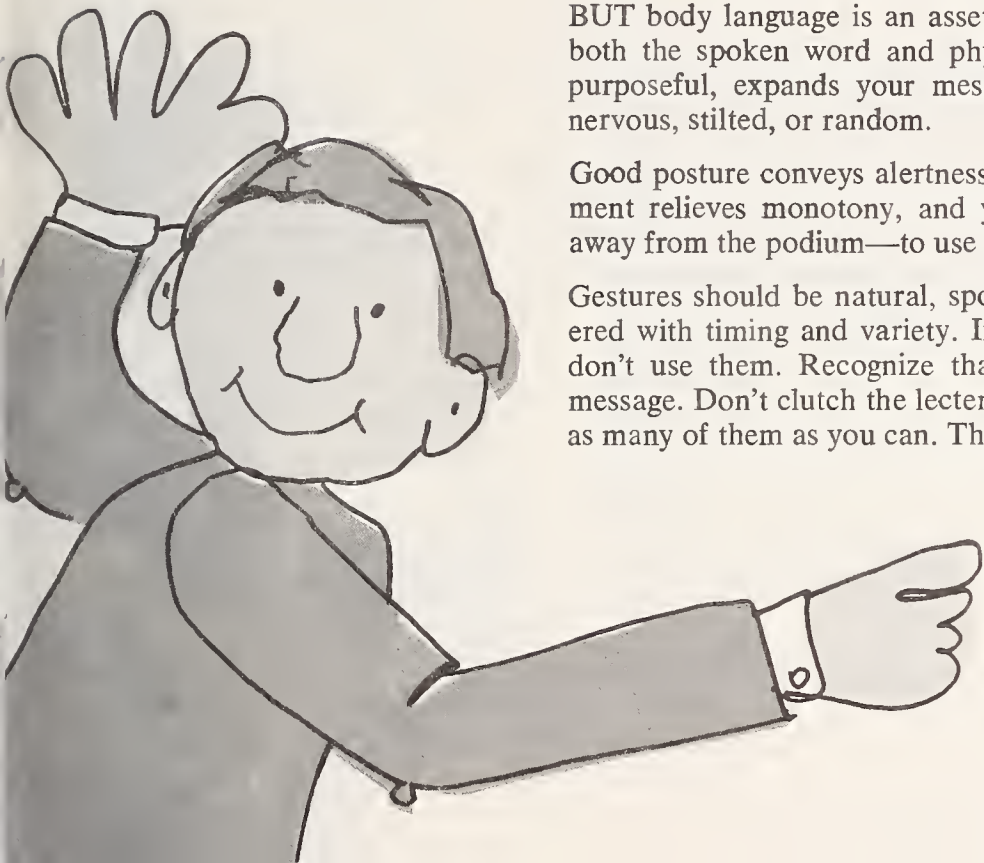
The Universal Language

Nonverbal behavior influences your audience almost as much as what you say. “Body language” involves communication through posture, movement, gesture, or expression. Body language can convey emphasis and personal feeling. It can add punctuation, clarity, and drama to your speech. Body language can relax and stimulate you while capturing audience attention.

BUT body language is an asset *only* when the audience gets one message from both the spoken word and physical action. Body language, when relaxed and purposeful, expands your message. It detracts from your message when it is nervous, stilted, or random.

Good posture conveys alertness and poise. Stand comfortably erect. Your movement relieves monotony, and your physical tension. Feel free to move briefly away from the podium—to use an audio-visual aid, for example.

Gestures should be natural, spontaneous, and appropriate, and should be delivered with timing and variety. If you feel uncomfortable with certain gestures—don’t use them. Recognize that all body language acts to communicate your message. Don’t clutch the lectern. Use facial expressions. Look at your audience, as many of them as you can. They give you instant feedback.



Putting your best foot forward

Use your voice naturally and forcefully. Speak clearly, and vary your speech rate, volume, and tone of voice. Choose words and a manner of speech that are appropriate, clear, and consistent with both your audience and yourself.

Let your audience know who you are. If you are not introduced by a moderator, identify yourself. State the purpose of your speech and tell the audience what they can gain by listening. Be yourself and say what you feel. If you can make the audience feel at ease, you will find you are at ease, too.

Earn the respect of all your listeners—even those who disagree with you—by treating the subject with realism, reasonableness, competence, and conviction. Make your points relevant; purely technical information has no appeal. Relate your speech to your listeners' experiences, and suggest potential applications of the information you give.

Tips for Giving a Lively Speech

ILLUSTRATING your speech with audio-visual aids involves your audience in your presentation. Because they are observing or listening, the audience stays alert. Your effectiveness is increased because aids: *involve* the listener, *capture* your speech succinctly, and *highlight* and *clarify* important points in your speech.

Aids may:

1. **Be graphic**—to represent and simplify quantities or processes. This includes charts, figures, table, graphs, and diagrams.
2. **Project**—to magnify information in the form of slides, transparencies, and films for large audiences. Projection also allows you to show motion, i.e., through movies.
3. **Be heard**—audio aids present voices, music, and sound effects on tape or records. These can be used with projection aids.
4. **Be printed**—materials may be handed out to preview or summarize a speech, or to provide supplemental technical material too detailed for an oral presentation.
5. **Demonstrate**—through models, samples, simulation, and role-playing exercises. Here, the audience can observe or participate in the presentation directly.
6. **Exhibit**—by bringing together materials in a logical arrangement and displaying them on a table or chart board. Here, the audience can see and touch items discussed.

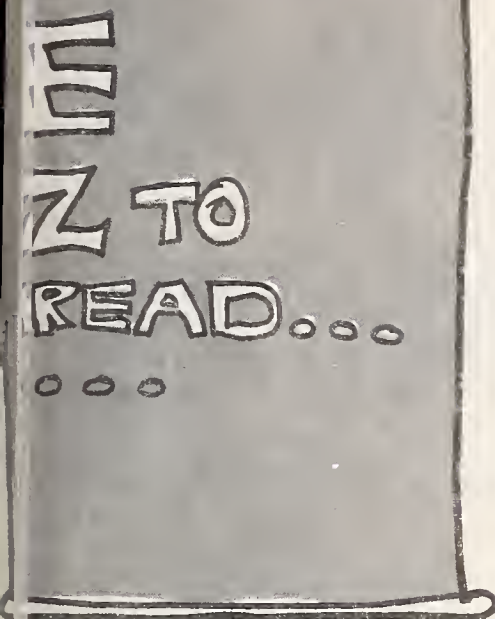


When selecting aids,

1. Choose aids which support your subject; don't distract, or merely entertain, the audience.
2. Consider your personal style, subject, and resources in deciding how many and what kind of aids you will use. Advise Institute staff of audio-visual equipment needed as early as possible before your presentation.
3. Preview all aids and prepare materials and devices in advance.
4. The time limit for displaying graphics and transparencies should be one minute each. Determine the length of time needed to present recordings, films, graphics, etc.

In creating aids,

1. Make sure each aid is accurate, organized, and clearly visible to everyone.
2. Make only one basic point per chart, transparency, etc. Include only essential details; don't just read what's on the slides or handouts.
3. Divide data among a series of aids, rather than squeezing everything on to a single aid.
4. Maintain a basic similarity among aids. Change your format (colors, scale, lettering, etc.) when you change topics.



In using aids,

1. Lead up to presenting an aid.
2. Introduce each aid by first telling the audience what it represents. In the case of visual aids (graphics and projection), use a pointer to focus on specific features.
3. Don't turn away from the audience too long.

Countdown

Before you take center stage, remind yourself of major points you want to cover and the principles of effective speaking. Observe the audience, and the room, to see if both are as you expected; determine if any last minute changes in your speech are needed. (Don't be afraid to edit, yourself!) Then visualize yourself delivering a dynamic speech, with the audience nodding in approval.

Before you actually begin your speech, defuse your tension with breathing exercises. (One easy exercise is to inhale deeply, then "sigh" silently as you exhale.) Concentrate on relaxing every part of your body, beginning with the scalp and working down to your toes (or vice versa, if you prefer)!

The Roles of a Public Speaker

You may find yourself assuming many roles as a public speaker. You may have to give a presentation, or moderate a panel discussion, or briefly introduce the next speaker, or lead a question and answer session.

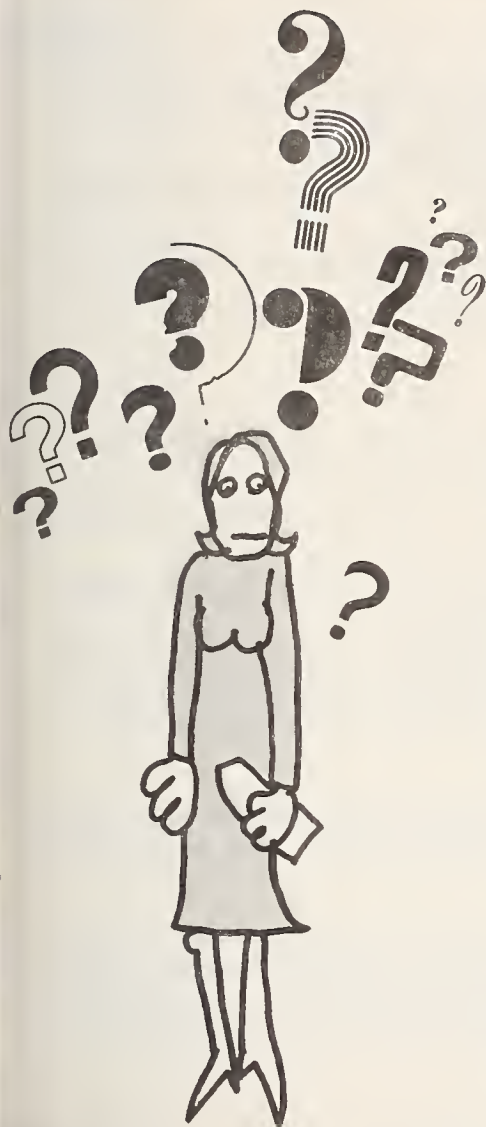
When you are a moderator:

Contact panel members before their presentations, and tell them where and when to appear. Ask how much time their presentations will take and whether they need any audio-visual equipment. Set the order of the speakers. Hold a brief meeting before the session to establish rapport, ground rules, and gather introductory material.

Once empaneled, briefly state the topic and explain to the audience why it is important. Introduce the panel member(s), giving:

- Names
- Affiliation
- Background and
- Relevance—why (s)he is a panel member (“Mr. Smith has recently been involved in a project that . . .”)

Tell the audience the ground rules. (Hold questions until the end, etc.) Moderate both the presentations and question/answer period. Watch the clock. Try to involve all panelists equally. Make sure that each person in the audience gets an equal chance to ask questions. Repeat each question from the audience. Start wrapping-up 5 minutes before the session is to end. Thank the speaker(s) and the audience. If time allows, briefly recap highlights of the session. Announce what, where, and when the next sessions are, and any agenda changes.



When you are the introducer:

A good introduction not only settles the audience but sets a mood. It focuses attention on the upcoming speech and alerts the speaker. Ahead of time, check the following information with the speaker:

- Full name and how to pronounce it
- Occupation
- Title and position
- Qualifications/professional background
- Topic
- Any additional information

In carrying out introductions, focus on the speaker, not yourself. Try to generate audience enthusiasm for the speaker and make him/her feel welcome and confident.

When you are the fielder:

Often in speech-making, questions and answers consume a greater portion of the time than the speech itself. Fielding questions offers opportunities to you. This allows you to:

- Get the audience involved.
- Demonstrate your ability to handle dissent, or display your knowledge in a particular subject.
- Clear up confusion and misunderstanding.
- Obtain feedback concerning your effectiveness, and
- Reinforce a point.

To properly control the situation and answer questions satisfactorily, be prepared. Determine if you are expected to conduct a separate question/answer session. If so, have the audience hold questions until that session. Otherwise,

seek questions after each complex point made during your speech. Know the answers, or promise to get them. Handle questions in this way:

- Look attentively at the questioner and listen patiently.
- Repeat the question—to be sure you understand it correctly and the audience heard it.
- Answer the question briefly but completely, speaking to the group. If they look quizzical, ask if your answer was responsive.

Some Tips:

1. In answering questions, be consistent.
2. If, occasionally, you don't know an answer, admit it. Then offer to check into it and get back to the questioner.
3. There is no such thing as a dumb question. Questions indicate a desire to learn and should be treated accordingly.
4. If a questioner fails to clearly convey his/her concerns for whatever reason, take a single prominent word and comment on it.
5. If no one asks any questions, have some prepared to answer, yourself (e.g., "One of the toughest questions I had to face when developing this program was . . .") or to ask the audience (e.g., "We are still struggling with . . . and I'd like to know how you handle it").

Don't spend too much time on one question. Invite the individual to continue the discussion after the session, or ask for related questions or comments from others.

In those rare instances when questioners seem more concerned with ridiculing or heckling you or your subject, keep a cool head. Refuse the bait; make no comments, except to acknowledge a major point made and move graciously on. Persistent heckling can be defused by suggesting a one-to-one discussion after the session.

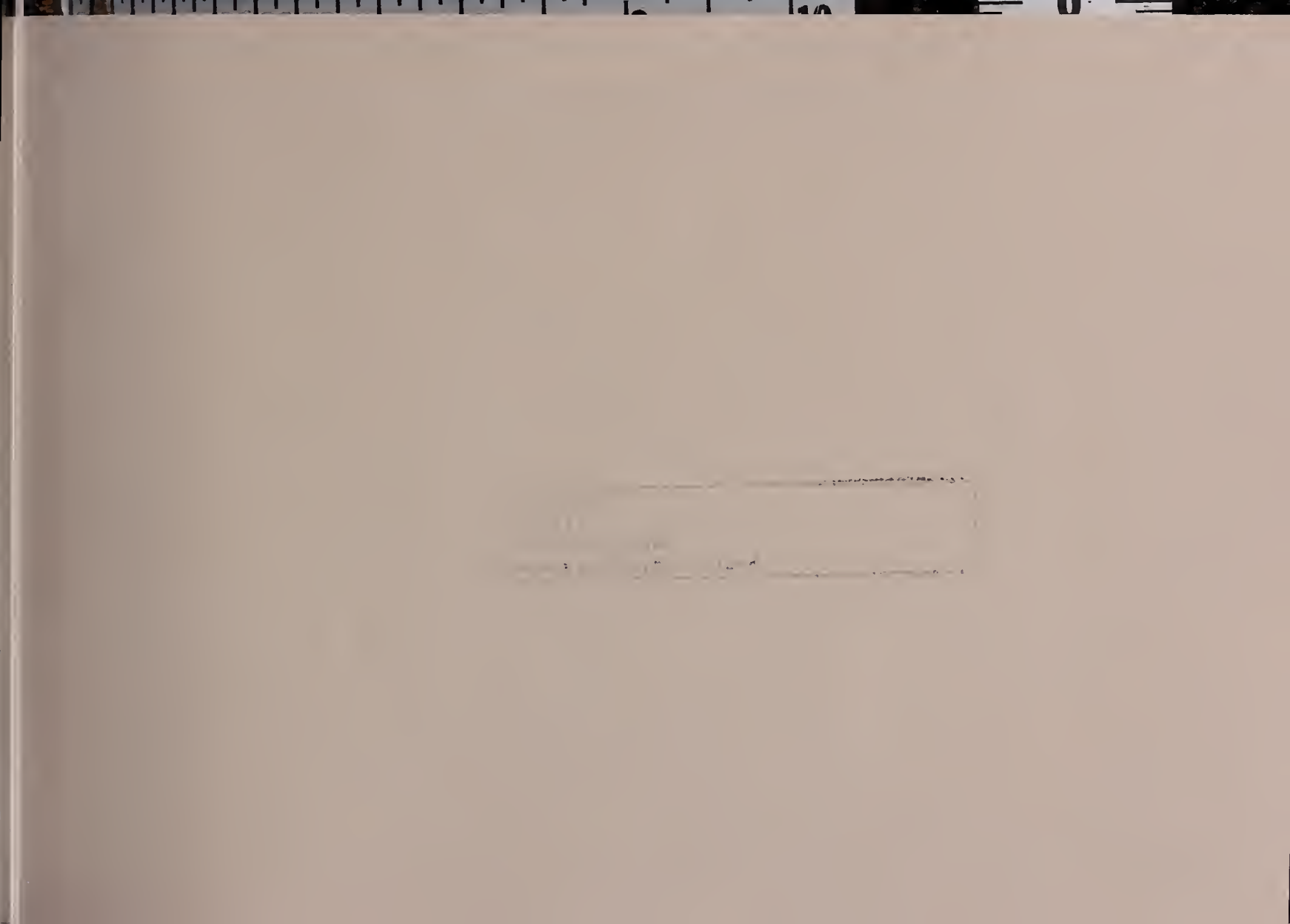
Finally

A reminder to all Institute speakers. Avoid the use of discriminatory or sexist terms. For example, the managers in your audience who happen to be female don't enjoy hearing themselves referred to as guys, as in "you guys really need this in your program." Difficult to do? Maybe. Impossible? Not really. This entire booklet contains no discriminatory references or terms of any kind.

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